



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Grain Inspection,
Packers and Stockyards
Administration

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Process Verification Points and Use of the USDA Process Verified Shield and The Term “USDA Process Verified”

POLICY: As stated in Directive 9180.79, the GIPSA Process Verified Program provides independent third-party verification that processing or marketing claims are clearly defined and verified.

1. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide a framework for determining whether a **processing or marketing claim**, referred to in this document as a **verification point**, can be accepted under the GIPSA Process Verified Program (PVP). It also provides guidelines for use of the verification points, the USDA Shield (logo), and the term, “USDA Process Verified”.

- 2. Definition** – Verification Points are processing, handling, service or marketing claims made by an organization that USDA has certified under the PVP. The claims are used for advertising or promotional purposes and demonstrate that the organization has added value to its product or service or employs practices beyond normal business activity. Verification points cannot be practices that are required by law, by the Process Verified Program or a standard under which the organization generally operates.

3. Verification Points

- 3.1 Verification Points must add value to the product or service.
- 3.2 Verification Points must be substantive, verifiable and repeatable.
- 3.3 Verification Points must be within the scope of the PVP.
- 3.4 Verification Points may not be requirements of a regulation, the Process Verified Program requirements, or a standard under which the organization generally operates.

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4. Examples of Verification Points

- 4.1 Allowable Verification Points can include:
 - 4.1.1 Source verification, identity preservation, and traceability to specific points within a system;
 - 4.1.2 Adherence to a recognized standard that is not otherwise required by industry or regulation;
 - 4.1.3 A unique production or handling practice;
 - 4.1.4 A service with a unique characteristic for that type of operation or outside normal business practice;
 - 4.1.5 A quantifiable characteristic such as size, weight, age, or grade;
 - 4.1.6 Documentation, monitoring or auditing that is unique to the company and outside normal business practice; and
 - 4.1.7 A characteristic, practice, or requirement that is specifically requested by a customer or consumer.
- 4.2 Non-allowable Verification Points may include:
 - 4.2.1 Adherence to Good Manufacturing Practices when it is a requirement,
 - 4.2.2 Conformance to Process Verified Program requirements,
 - 4.2.3 Objectives of the Quality Management System, and
 - 4.2.3. Compliance to industry rules and regulations

5. Auditing the Verification Points

- 5.1 Verification points must be clearly stated in the quality manual. The claims will be reviewed during the adequacy audit to establish that they meet the above requirements. Applicants must provide appropriate information to establish the validity of the claims.
- 5.2 Each Verification Point will be audited during the on-site audit to verify that the claims are accurate and repeatable.

- 6. Using the USDA Process Verified shield, the term “USDA Process Verified” or a Verification Point**
- 6.1 A verification point may be used in advertising, promotional material or on a product label. Promotional materials include, but are not limited to, website, commercials on TV or radio and printed material such as brochures, magazines and newspapers.
 - 6.2 Use of the USDA Shield and the term “USDA Process Verified” must ensure that the shield or term is used in direct association with a clear description of the verification points. A verification point may be used with the USDA Shield or the term “USDA Process Verified” when:
 - 6.2.1 The verification point is printed immediately adjacent to the USDA Process Verified shield or the term “USDA Process Verified”.
 - 6.2.2 An asterisk is printed near the USDA Process Verified shield or the term “USDA Process Verified” referring the reader to information about the verification points. The additional information must be on a product label or point of sale information. When point of sale information is used, it must be readily available and within close proximity of the display counter containing the product.
 - 6.3 The Process Verified Program must approve use of the USDA Process Verified shield or the term “USDA Process Verified”.
 - 6.4 Retail product labels bearing the USDA Process Verified shield or the term “USDA Process Verified” must be reviewed by the appropriate agency for approval.
 - 6.5 The USDA Shield and the term “USDA Process Verified” must not be misrepresented or used in association with a company claim that is not verified under the PVP.